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OTTAWA, Ontario
K1A 0G2

January 6, 1984

Mr. R. Shotton
6018 Cherry Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3H 2K3

Dear Mr. Shotton:

I refer to your letter of October 10 regarding East Timor. I understand that you have also recently written to the Honourable Gerald Regan as well as to Departmental officials and that replies to your earlier letters have already been forwarded.

There is little I can add to what has already been conveyed to you about the Canadian position on Timor. You may be interested to know, however, that it has now been confirmed that the Timor question will not be discussed during the current session of the United Nations General Assembly and it remains to be seen whether the issue will be raised next year.

There is one aspect of your letter upon which I would offer comment and that concerns the parallels you draw on the one hand between the German invasion of Poland, and the Chinese invasion of Korea or the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; and on the other hand, the Indonesian integration of Timor. It is my view that there are in fact no valid grounds for making a comparison of this sort. At the time of the Indonesian incorporation Timor was not an identifiable sovereign state nor was there any firm indication, apart from activities of the minority Fretilin forces, that the people of Timor supported independence for East Timor. Indeed a significant number of East Timorese related by culture, language and family to the Indonesians of Timorese origin in West Timor, requested the Indonesian authorities to intervene in the Portuguese colony.

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Canada supports the concept of self-determination and the record of the Canadian government in this regard is quite clear. The Canadian decision to vote against motions sponsored by the government of Portugal and others was made on the basis that the resolution took little account of the political and humanitarian realities of the situation in Timor.

The Canadian government will continue to monitor the situation in Timor and, where appropriate, to bring to the attention of the Indonesian government the views of concerned Canadians.

Yours sincerely,

Allan J. MacEachen